UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/22264
25 February 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 23 FEBRUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to you by Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Leader of the Great Revolution of 1 September.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ali A. TREIKI
Permanent Representative

READEX
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Annex

Letter dated 23 February 1991 from the Leader of the Great Revolution of 1 September addressed to the President of the Security Council

Iraq is being subjected to a deliberate process of humiliation. It has become clear that the intention behind what is now taking place is not the recovery of Kuwait at all, nor is this operation being conducted in accordance with any of the Security Council resolutions.

What is occurring is an operation designed to debase the Arab community - through Iraq - in the eyes of the world. Iraq has decided to withdraw from Kuwait: whether within a week or two weeks, it is a matter of a few days. There can be no doubt that peace is more valuable than this.

We have patiently endured the occupation of Kuwait for months. Why should we not be patient for a few days in order to save peace and the future?

Even if the West does inflict its humiliation on the Arabs through Iraq, and even if Iraq is defeated, the result will be the collapse of the United Nations, just as the League of Nations collapsed. Bitter enmity will also be sown between West and East, and particularly Arabs and Muslims. The price will be a future loss greater than any temporary victory over Iraq and the Arab community.

These are historic moments in which we must exercise self-restraint in recognition of our responsibility to peoples and our responsibility to ensure a future free of revenge, hatred, the exchange of hostilities and their legacy.

Iraq will withdraw from Kuwait: this is an achievement for international legitimacy. Bloodshed can be prevented, and it is possible to maintain the prestige of the United Nations rather than to kill it off.

All that is lacking is self-restraint in these decisive moments.

We call upon the United Nations and the Security Council - and any civilized peoples - to allow a historic opportunity for reason and law to prevail and for the Security Council alone to determine the way in which steps may be taken to attain a solution which preserves the honour of all. The most important consideration is to preserve peace and to prevent bloodshed.

I am convinced that the problem of Kuwait is over, but Iraq has no choice other than to defend its dignity and the dignity of the Arab community, whatever the price. Libya places itself at the disposal of the United Nations to play the courageous role from which all others have shrunk.

Colonel Muammar QADDAFI